CLAIMS

1. Method for dynamically allocating a cost to an e-mail that a first user of a transmission network who is of a member of a group, wants to forward to a second user of the transmission network who is also a member of said group, comprising the steps of :
   - forwarding by said first user said e-mail to a market engine in charge of allocating a cost to said e-mail;
   - determining by said market engine the cost of said e-mail based upon intrinsic and extrinsic criteria;
   - submitting the cost of said e-mail to said first user for agreement;
   - forwarding by said market engine said e-mail to said second user; and
   - updating a credit account associated with said first user.

2. Method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of running said market engine as a local market engine when running at the client device associated with each user.

3. Method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of running said market engine as a central market engine including a user credit database which contains the credit accounts of all users and which is accessed by said central market engine when this one has to determine the cost of said e-mail.

4. Method according to claim 3, further comprising the step of maintaining the credit account of each user in a credit database at the client device associated with said user.

5. Method according to claim 4 wherein said step of maintaining said credit account included in the credit database of said

central market engine and the credit database at the client device associated with each user further includes the step of providing for said user a number of credit points at some specific periods.

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6. Method according to claim 5, wherein said step determining the cost of said e-mail by using intrinsic and extrinsic criteria are further defined by taking into consideration four parameters being respectively, positions of said first and second users in a

10 hierarchy of the group, size of said e-mail, subject of said e-mail and device type for e-mail delivery, said extrinsic criteria being used for adjusting said intrinsic criteria for each parameter.

15 7. Method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of defining said extrinsic criteria for said respective positions of said first and second users in the hierarchy by a matrix wherein a value of each element $d(i,j)$ associated with a sender i and a receiver j determined by the decision of a high lever manager of

20 said group.

8. Method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of defining said extrinsic criteria for the size of said e-mail by a matrix wherein a value of each element $\beta(i,j)$ associated with a

25 sender i and a receiver j is determined by said receiver j.

9. Method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of defining said intrinsic criteria for the subject of said e-mail by a matrix T wherein a value of each element $T(i,j)$ associated

30 with a sender i and a receiver j is determined by the guidelines of said group.

10. Method according to claim 9, further comprising the step of defining said extrinsic criteria for the subject of said e-mail by a matrix wherein a value of each element $X_{(i,j)}$ associated with

5 sender i and receiver j for adjusting the value of the corresponding element $T_{(i,j)}$ of said matrix ^{T} is determined by said receiver j.

11. Method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of

10 defining said intrinsic criteria for the device type by a matrix ^{D} wherein a value of each element $D_{(i,j)}$ associated with a sender i and a receiver j is determined by the guidelines of said group.

12. Method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of

15 dynamically determining each of said extrinsic criteria by the administrator of the system based upon system information such as messages on network overloads.

13. Method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of re-prioritizing and repositioning said e-mail by said second user

20 when it is received from said market engine.

14. Method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of providing said group as a large company and said users as employees of said company.

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15. Method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of providing said market engine as a central market engine when running as a server.

16. Method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of dynamically determining each of said extrinsic criteria by the administrator of the system based upon system information such as messages on buffer overflows.

5 17. Method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of dynamically determining each of said extrinsic criteria by the administrator of the system based upon system information such as messages on special actions such as a group discussion forum.

18. A service for dynamically allocating a cost to an e-mail that
10 a first user of a transmission network who is of a member of a group, wants to forward to a second user of the transmission network who is also a member of said group, said service comprising the method steps of :
- forwarding by said first user said e-mail to a market
15 engine in charge of allocating a cost to said e-mail;
- determining by said market engine the cost of said e-mail based upon intrinsic and extrinsic criteria;
- submitting the cost of said e-mail to said first user for agreement;
20 - forwarding by said market engine said e-mail to said second user; and
- updating a credit account associated with said first user.

19. An article of manufacture dynamically allocating a cost to an e-mail that a first user of a transmission network who is of a
25 member of a group, wants to forward to a second user of the transmission network who is also a member of said group, comprising a machine readable medium tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a machine for implementing a method, the method comprising steps of:

- forwarding by said first user said e-mail to a market engine in charge of allocating a cost to said e-mail;

- determining by said market engine the cost of said e-mail based upon intrinsic and extrinsic criteria;

5 - submitting the cost of said e-mail to said first user for agreement;

- forwarding by said market engine said e-mail to said second user; and

- updating a credit account associated with said first user.